

Record Numbers Registered and Voted in 2002 Election, Census Bureau Reports

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A record number of people for a non-presidential election, 128 million, registered to vote in the 2002 congressional elections. Another record number, 89 million, reported they voted in the elections, according to a report released today by the U.S. Census Bureau. About 123 million people were registered to vote in 1998, the previous all-time high. The previous record turnout was 86 million in 1994. Reported turnout by registered voters was 69 percent in 2002, higher than the 68 percent who cast ballots in 1998.

The report, **Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2002**, said most of the rise in both the number of people registering and voting since 1966 (the first non-presidential election turnout surveyed by the Census Bureau) resulted from the increased number of people 18 and over in the nation's population. In 1966, 79 million people were registered to vote and 63 million voted. People who are older, married or have at least a bachelor's degree, and women were more likely to vote, according to the report. Among registered nonvoters in 2002, about 27 percent reported they did not vote because they were too busy or had conflicting work or school schedules.

Table 1 shows that 18-24 year olds had the lowest registration rate (43 percent)¹ while the "65 to 74 years" cohort had the highest (78.6 percent). This relationship held true for voting shares as well.

Table 1. Reported Voting and Registration, by Age and Gender: November 2002
(numbers in thousands)

| Sex and age | Total | Total Population | | | | U.S. citizen | |
|-------------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|----------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | | Reported registered | | Reported voted | | Reported registered | |
| | | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| BOTH SEXES | | | | | | | |
| Total 18 years and over | 210,421 | 128,154 | 60.9 | 88,903 | 42.3 | 128,154 | 66.5 |
| 18 to 24 years | 27,377 | 10,470 | 38.2 | 4,697 | 17.2 | 10,470 | 43.0 |
| 25 to 34 years | 38,512 | 19,339 | 50.2 | 10,450 | 27.1 | 19,339 | 58.9 |
| 35 to 44 years | 43,716 | 26,214 | 60.0 | 17,569 | 40.2 | 26,214 | 66.8 |
| 45 to 54 years | 40,043 | 27,006 | 67.4 | 20,088 | 50.2 | 27,006 | 71.8 |
| 55 to 64 years | 26,881 | 19,424 | 72.3 | 15,432 | 57.4 | 19,424 | 75.6 |
| 65 to 74 years | 17,967 | 13,681 | 76.1 | 11,339 | 63.1 | 13,681 | 78.6 |
| 75 years and over | 15,925 | 12,020 | 75.5 | 9,328 | 58.6 | 12,020 | 77.3 |
| MALE | | | | | | | |
| Total 18 years and over | 100,939 | 59,422 | 58.9 | 41,801 | 41.4 | 59,422 | 64.8 |
| 18 to 24 years | 13,701 | 4,782 | 34.9 | 2,155 | 15.7 | 4,782 | 40.1 |
| 25 to 34 years | 19,064 | 9,114 | 47.8 | 4,880 | 25.6 | 9,114 | 56.6 |
| 35 to 44 years | 21,445 | 12,291 | 57.3 | 8,351 | 38.9 | 12,291 | 64.5 |
| 45 to 54 years | 19,522 | 12,918 | 66.2 | 9,575 | 49.0 | 12,918 | 70.4 |
| 55 to 64 years | 12,926 | 9,276 | 71.8 | 7,497 | 58.0 | 9,276 | 75.2 |
| 65 to 74 years | 8,184 | 6,222 | 76.0 | 5,306 | 64.8 | 6,222 | 78.4 |
| 75 years and over | 6,097 | 4,819 | 79.0 | 4,037 | 66.2 | 4,819 | 80.9 |
| FEMALE | | | | | | | |
| Total 18 years and over | 109,481 | 68,732 | 62.8 | 47,102 | 43.0 | 68,732 | 68.0 |
| 18 to 24 years | 13,676 | 5,688 | 41.6 | 2,542 | 18.6 | 5,688 | 45.8 |
| 25 to 34 years | 19,447 | 10,225 | 52.6 | 5,570 | 28.6 | 10,225 | 61.0 |
| 35 to 44 years | 22,271 | 13,923 | 62.5 | 9,218 | 41.4 | 13,923 | 69.0 |
| 45 to 54 years | 20,521 | 14,088 | 68.7 | 10,514 | 51.2 | 14,088 | 73.2 |
| 55 to 64 years | 13,955 | 10,148 | 72.7 | 7,935 | 56.9 | 10,148 | 76.0 |
| 65 to 74 years | 9,783 | 7,459 | 76.2 | 6,032 | 61.7 | 7,459 | 78.7 |
| 75 years and over | 9,828 | 7,200 | 73.3 | 5,291 | 53.8 | 7,200 | 75.2 |

¹ Registration rates reported for citizens only.

Women registered at a rate 3 percentage points higher than men – 68.0 and 64.8 percent, respectively – with the largest differentials in the 18-24 years and 25-34 years cohorts. Registration rates were essentially equal above 55 years of age. Women reported voting at higher rates than men up to the age of 55 years. After that the male rate of voting was higher.

Regionally, citizens residing in the Midwest were more likely to register (69 percent) and to vote (49 percent) than those in other regions. Voting rates in the Northeast, South and West were about 45 percent each. The West had the lowest registration rate (63 percent), while the Northeast and South each had around 67 percent. Excluding North Dakota, which has no voter registration, Maine and Minnesota had the highest levels of voter registration in the country at about 80 percent. **Michigan tied with Iowa for 9th place at 72.2 percent.** The states with the highest voter turnout rates were Minnesota and South Dakota, at around 67 percent each. **Michigan tied for 18th with Louisiana at 50.3 percent.**

Table 2 shows that, when taking only citizens in account, Michigan's rate of registration was 72.3 percent, almost 6 percentage points above the national average. While the gap narrowed for percent voting, Michigan's rate exceeded 50 percent and outdistanced the national average by 4.2 percentage points. A Michigan advantage was shown across all age groups up until 75 years and over, where the rates were essentially the same for both registration and voting.

Table 2. Registration and Voting Rates, by Age, for Citizens in the U.S. and Michigan: November 2002

| | Percent registered (18+) | | Percent voted (18+) | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| | United States | Michigan | United States | Michigan |
| Total | 66.5 | 72.3 | 46.1 | 50.3 |
| 18 to 24 | 43.0 | 49.5 | 19.3 | 21.4 |
| 25 to 44 | 63.2 | 71.3 | 38.9 | 43.5 |
| 45 to 64 | 73.4 | 77.5 | 56.1 | 61.4 |
| 65 to 74 | 78.6 | 86.0 | 65.1 | 74.4 |
| 75+ | 77.3 | 78.0 | 60.0 | 60.0 |

Other highlights:

Among those registered to vote, turnout was 71 percent for non-Hispanic whites, 68 percent for blacks, 63 percent for Asians and Pacific islanders and 58 percent for Hispanics. Among registered voters in 2002, Hispanics who were naturalized citizens were more likely to vote (64 percent) than were their counterparts who were U.S. citizens by birth (56 percent).

Table 3 provides a detailed breakout of the registration and voting behavior in 2002 of Michigan residents by gender, race and ethnicity. We earlier reported on the higher registration and voting rates for women over men. We also see in Table 3 that, when controlled for citizenship, Non-Hispanic Whites had the highest registration and voting rates. Non-Hispanic Blacks trailed in rate of registration by 8.1 percentage points and in rate of voting by 6.6 percentage points. While Latinos reported registering at a rate close to African Americans (65.3 vs. 66.1 percent, respectively), their voting rate was 10 percentage points less. The Asian community came in well behind all groups in both registration and voting rates.

It is clear that the political parties have a great deal of work ahead to energize the population to register – a task that has been taken on by a number of groups targeting by age and race/ethnicity. While registration outreach is quite widespread, the real question will be what is it going to take to motivate those registered to get to the polls and vote. The major untapped markets are those under 35 years of age, coupled with the increasing numbers of Hispanics, Asians and other ethnic (Arab American, Chaldean, etc.) communities.

**Table 3. Registration and Voting Rates, by Gender, Race and Ethnicity, for Citizens in Michigan:
November 2002**

| | Population 18 and over | Percent citizen | Percent registered (18+) | Percent voted (18+) |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Total | 7,629 | 96.0 | 72.3 | 50.3 |
| Male | 3,697 | 95.6 | 70.0 | 48.3 |
| Female | 3,933 | 96.4 | 74.3 | 52.2 |
| Non-Hispanic White | 6,134 | 98.3 | 74.2 | 52.2 |
| Non-Hispanic Black | 950 | 98.5 | 66.1 | 45.6 |
| Asian and Pacific Islander | 257 | 54.6 | 46.4 | 29.3 |
| Hispanic (of any race) | 237 | 70.3 | 65.3 | 33.5 |
| White | 6,359 | 97.2 | 74.0 | 51.7 |
| Black | 953 | 98.5 | 66.2 | 45.6 |

The data in the report are from the November 2002 Voting and Registration Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS). Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. As discussed in greater detail in the report, the CPS estimate of overall turnout (89 million) differs from the “official” turnout, as reported by the Clerk of the House.